Judicial reforms

572. SHRI AHMED BHAI PATEL: SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Judiciary is likely to undergo a transformation and revamping to undo the negative image of judiciary under the chairmanship of Chief Justice of India;

(b) whether long-awaited judicial reforms are finally underway to ensure speedy and inexpensive justice to urban and rural poor;

(c) if so, whether the judges themselves have evolved a draft code of conduct so that they must perform their duties in a better and honest way;

(d) whether the Prime Minister had convened a meeting of the Chief Justices, CMs and Governors which had formulated an action plan to reform and modernise judicial system in the country;

(e) if so, to what extent the judiciary has been reformed or is under reformation;

(f) whether the appointments of judges of various high courts and other courts are being expedited;

(g) if so, what are the total vacancies that have not been so far fulfilled; and

(h) whether the initiative taken by the Chief Justice of India in judicial reforms has given a moral boost to the people of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) As informed by the Registry of the Supreme Court, the Chief Justice of India has initiated certain steps calculated to improve the image of Judiciary. However, it is a matter of opinion that these changes can be said to amount to a transformation and a thorough revamp.

(b), (d) and (e) A meeting of the Chief Ministers and Chief Justices of High Courts was held on 4th December, 1993 under the chairmanship of Prime Minister of India to consider the problem of arrears of cases in courts and to find out ways and means to deal with it as expeditiously as possible. The conference adopted several resolutions with a view to providing speedy and cheaper justice to all the litigants. These resolutions have been forwarded to all the State Governments/UTs, High Courts and the Central Government Departments for necessary action.

(c) The Chief Justices' Conference had appointed a Sub-Committee consisting of Supreme Court and High Court Judges to restate certain fundamental principles and values of judicial life which may generally be referred to as a Code of Conduct for the Judges. As it is intended as a selfimposed Code, the draft is under discussion amongst Judges of the High Courts. Some High Courts have accepted the Code.

(f) The process of filling up of the existing vacancies of Judges in the Supreme Court and High Courts is on in consultation with the concerned Constitutional authorities.

(g) As on 16.2.1994, there were 4 vacancies of Judges in the Supreme Court and 84 vacancies of Judges in the High Courts.

(h) Perceptions are shared that some efforts are being made in this direction.

Letters received from M.Ps.

573. SHRI MOHAMMED AFZAL *alias* MEEM AFZAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of letters written by the Members of Parliament to the Ministry of Law, Justice and Company Affairs during the period from 1st April,-1990 to 31st March, 1993 alongwith yearwise details thereof;

(b) the number of letters out of them that were acknowledged;

(c) what is the number of letters in respect of which final replies were sent; and

(d) what is the break-up of final letters issued by the Ministry containing positive and negative replies respectively?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.